OUR COMMUNITY

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS IN SALT LAKE COUNTY

2023 Community Needs Assessment
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About Us

Aging & Adult Services is a division of the Salt Lake County Department of Human Services that offers variety of services and programs designed to meet the needs of our community’s diverse population of older adults and those who care for them.

As the federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Salt Lake County, we serve over 16,000 individuals each year with a mission of promoting independence through advocacy, engagement, and access to resources.
Executive Summary

In 2017, Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services (AAS) embarked on an ambitious research project to assess the needs of the community relative to aging and older adults. At that time, agency leadership also committed to ensuring a new assessment of community needs every five years. 2023 marks five years since the publication of the last AAS Community Needs Assessment. This report details the most recent research and its findings.

AAS once again contracted with Lighthouse Research & Development, Inc. to conduct the community needs research and analysis. Over the course of three months, agency personnel worked closely with researchers to complete a three-phase project designed to determine the most important community needs for older adults. The research phases included six focus groups, sixteen in-depth interviews with subject matter experts, and a mixed-mode (online and telephone) survey of the public. Ultimately, the project has revealed where gaps in services exist in the community and how AAS can best position itself to provide high quality, high impact services to aging adults in the coming years.

The results demonstrate that needs among older adults are significant and are focused on several key areas. Consistent with past findings, areas of greatest need remain healthcare, transportation, and nutrition. In addition, in-home services, housing, mental and behavioral health, and socialization were frequently mentioned by research participants as top-level community needs.

As in 2017, healthcare was mentioned by respondents in all three phases of the research as the most important service to which older adults need access. Healthcare is a broad category – in discussions with focus group participants and interview and survey respondents, a wide variety of issue areas fell under healthcare, including the cost of care, access to affordable prescription drugs, understanding the complexities of insurance and Medicare eligibility, identifying providers, and other concerns.

Next to healthcare, transportation and nutrition were areas of need with the largest difference in scores between importance (which was rated high) and how well the community meets the need (which was rated substantially lower).

Focus group and interview participants also frequently mentioned available funding for programs that serve older individuals as a barrier to addressing community needs. That is, participants suggested that more funding for aging-related programming in a variety of areas is needed.

Notably, all areas of need that were surveyed both in 2017 and 2023 showed a drop in community satisfaction scores. This could be due to a number of factors, including lingering issues from the COVID-19 pandemic, increased “competition” for services as more adults age into eligibility, changes in the economy or political climate, or other influences on community sentiment.

Aging & Adult Services will use this information to guide its future strategy and decision-making, manage program implementation and resource allocation, and achieve greater impact through partnerships and innovation. AAS hopes that this research will be of use to other providers in the community serving older adults. We encourage you to utilize this research in your own work, and we invite you to join our efforts to make Salt Lake County a great place to grow older.
Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed for Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services from the research findings. These recommendations are offered as supplements to AAS’ existing slate of programs, which provide services that address a myriad of needs of older adults in Salt Lake County.

**Develop new partnerships to address access to healthcare services and information.**

Consistent with 2017 findings, healthcare emerged in the research as the most important community need for older adults in Salt Lake County. Healthcare is a vast category with many varying needs that fall within its scope. AAS is not a healthcare provider, although it does offer several services that support health and healthcare needs, including the work of the Supported Aging program, the Senior Health Insurance Information Program, and Health Promotion & Education programming. AAS should continue to offer these services, and where practicable should seek and take advantage of new opportunities to provide access to resources and information that fall under the broad category of healthcare. AAS should also seek to engage partnerships with community healthcare providers to help address gaps in services and connect older adults with resources.

**Invest in senior center meal programs that promote socialization and engagement.**

Nutrition and socialization both emerged as top-level needs in this year’s assessment. AAS Services has found that café style center meal programs increase participation and engagement at senior centers. Café style centers, in contrast to traditional congregate meal sites, offer a restaurant-style setting and additional alternate meal options that cafeteria-style congregate sites don’t carry. Center patrons strongly prefer the less institutional feel of café style centers, and we know from research and experience that center meal programs are among the most effective opportunities for socialization that Area Agencies on Aging offer. AAS currently operates three café style centers and should continue to invest in updating and adapting existing congregate meal programs to café models. Doing so promises to maximize the efficiency of existing centers in terms of both providing quality nutrition programming and addressing social isolation.

**Leverage technology and volunteer forces to bolster home-delivered meals and transportation services.**

Nutrition and transportation remain high priority needs for older adults in Salt Lake County in 2023. AAS has done a notable job of maximizing efficiency of the home-delivered meals and medical transportation programs it offers, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which strained program staff and resources. As demand for these vital services continues to rise, AAS should seek to leverage innovative technology and maximize volunteer forces to bolster long-term program sustainability.

**Engage in advocacy and resource development to support home-delivered meal programs and other vital services such as housing and mental healthcare.**
Many focus group and interview participants suggested that an underlying community issue is lack of funding for programs that provide vital services for older adults. Interestingly, these discussions occurred with both members of the public and community service providers who work with older adults (including members of AAS’ staff). That is – it’s not just staff of community organizations lamenting limited funding – it’s older adults themselves, who have observed this independently.

AAS’ nutrition program is supported by a mix of federal, state, and local funding. As the need for nutrition and other services (in particular, senior housing and mental healthcare) grow, AAS should work to advocate for additional funding resources for its own programs and for the state of Utah’s older population, generally. Specifically, AAS should continue efforts to advocate for a continuation in home-delivered meals state funding, the current allocation for which expires in 2025. As a part of these efforts, AAS can work with partner organizations to bring attention to other matters affecting older adults that can be impacted by an increase of dedicated, ongoing resources.

Engage in efforts to build community understanding and support for vital in-home services.

Salt Lake County’s older adult population continues to grow as baby boomers age into retirement. As this population increases, so too will the need for in-home services. In-home services can include assistance with bathing, laundry, proper nutrition, caregiver respite, and companionship as well as such items as emergency response systems, shower chairs, and safety grab bars that help older individuals age in place and remain independent.

Indeed, in-home services were mentioned more frequently in 2023 than in 2017. AAS has noted that contracted providers for in-home services have felt the impact of a changing labor market, resulting in fewer qualified applicants, more open job roles, and an overall shortage of personal care staff. AAS’ Supported Aging programs depend on and appreciate contracted providers, as they serve as the eyes and ears regarding client well-being. AAS can play a role in helping to strengthen this workforce by engaging in efforts to educate the public, policy makers, and community leaders about the importance of in-home services and the role they will play in our society and economy in the coming decades. AAS cannot solve this labor shortage, but it can help to build understanding and support for personal care work by shining a light on this crucial community need.

Elevate the voices of older adults in community planning and development efforts.

Perhaps most important, AAS must continue and intensify efforts to promote the needs of older adults in community-wide strategic planning, state policy discussions, and among the business community. It’s common in human services to develop a mission of eradication – to end hunger, eliminate poverty, or stop crime. But when it comes to aging, the end goal is not to stop aging, but to age well, with self-determination, purpose, and opportunities to thrive.

Utah is currently the fastest growing state in the U.S. and, according to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, will have more older adults than school-aged children by 2060\(^1\). The demand for aging-related services will only continue to grow. So, too, must the public and political will to recognize and address the needs of older adults as communities allocate resources and plan for the future. Area Agencies on Aging do a remarkable job meeting the needs of older adults, but they cannot do it alone. Without a place at the table for older adults, the public perception of how well this community cares for its elders will not improve.
Area Demographics

All data in this section is from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2021 5-year estimates, the most recent year for which data is available.

**Community Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Salt Lake County</th>
<th>Utah</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>1,186,257</td>
<td>3,380,800</td>
<td>333,287,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avg. Household Size</strong></td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Below Poverty</strong></td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign Born</strong></td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School Graduate or Higher</strong></td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Travel Time to Work (Mins)</strong></td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Age</strong></td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Home Value</strong></td>
<td>$367,300</td>
<td>$339,700</td>
<td>$244,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
<td>$82,206</td>
<td>$79,133</td>
<td>$69,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment Rate</strong></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veterans</strong></td>
<td>37,345</td>
<td>118,744</td>
<td>17,431,290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Population Characteristics: Older Adults in Salt Lake County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults 65+ in Salt Lake County</th>
<th>Salt Lake County</th>
<th>Utah</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>138,027</td>
<td>388,120</td>
<td>55,892,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (#)</td>
<td>63,907</td>
<td>183,193</td>
<td>25,207,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (#)</td>
<td>74,120</td>
<td>204,927</td>
<td>30,684,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Born</td>
<td>14,493</td>
<td>43,858</td>
<td>7,876,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economic & Household Characteristics: Older Adults in Salt Lake County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults 65+ in Salt Lake County</th>
<th>Salt Lake County</th>
<th>Utah</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty</td>
<td>11,632</td>
<td>29,419</td>
<td>41,393,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householders Living Alone</td>
<td>30,330</td>
<td>78,377</td>
<td>14,353,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with Other Relatives</td>
<td>20,784</td>
<td>50,274</td>
<td>7,942,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in Labor Force</td>
<td>48,309</td>
<td>125,363</td>
<td>5,756,877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Racial Demographics: Older Adults in Salt Lake County

**Race & Ethnicity**  
Salt Lake County, Utah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Adults 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Race</strong></td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black or African American</strong></td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Indian and Alaska Native</strong></td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian</strong></td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</strong></td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some Other Race</strong></td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two or more races</strong></td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic or Latino Origin</strong></td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Hispanic or Latino Origin</strong></td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Characteristics: Older Adults in Salt Lake County

**Adults 65+ in Salt Lake County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Salt Lake County</th>
<th>Utah</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Currently Married</strong></td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School Graduate or Higher</strong></td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veterans</strong></td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Key Findings

Focus Group Results
Six focus groups were held in February 2023 with members of the general public and personnel from service providers that work with older adults, including Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services. Specifically, two groups were held with the public, and four were held with a mix of employees from Aging & Adult Services and other providers.

The main objectives of this research project were to discover perceptions of aging, determine awareness of aging services, and understand the needs of aging adults. To accomplish the project objectives, participants were guided through a discussion that encompassed the following topics and themes:

Gather Perceptions of Aging
- Define aging, according to participants
- Identify the benefits and drawbacks of aging
- Identify the limitations aging members of the community face and define the limitations participants have been surprised by
- Discover who will care for participants as they get older

Understand the Needs of Aging Adults
- Identify the current and future needs participants have as they age
- Identify the needs of individuals in various demographic segments
- Discuss participants’ various aging needs

Determine Awareness and Perceptions of Aging Services
- Determine if participants feel various aging needs are met by programs and services available to the aging community
- Identify the people or organizations participants rely on to meet their aging-related needs
- Discover awareness of Aging & Adult Services programing
- Discover participation in Aging & Adult Services programming
- Gauge perception and satisfaction with Aging & Adult Services programming
- Determine what would motivate participants to become more involved in aging programs and services

Key Findings: Perceptions of Aging
When asked to identify the words, thoughts, and phrases that come to mind when they hear the word “aging,” participants most frequently mentioned words such as “limitations,” “wisdom,” “loss,” “changes,” and “old.”

When asked about the limitations individuals face as they age, general public participants most frequently mentioned physical limitations. AAS staff and community partners were more likely to mention following limitations individuals face as they age:
Frontline staff and program staff indicated that spouses or children most frequently care for their loved ones when they cannot care for themselves. However, when they can no longer care for themselves, general public participants most frequently said they don’t know who will care for them, they hope their children will care for them, or they will live in a care facility so as to not burden their families.

**Key Findings: Needs of Aging Adults**

When asked about the needs older adults have, general public participants most frequently said they need assistance with in-home services and transportation. Participants also said older adults need access to transportation, healthcare and socialization.

Participants most frequently mentioned the following when discussing the unique needs of these groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Low-Income</th>
<th>Hispanics/Latinos</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Need socialization</td>
<td>• Need socialization</td>
<td>• Housing</td>
<td>• Have language barriers</td>
<td>• Pacific Islanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have difficulty asking for help</td>
<td>• Need assistance learning traditionally male roles</td>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td>• Have cultural barriers</td>
<td>• Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need meals, nutrition</td>
<td>• Need assistance learning traditionally male roles</td>
<td>• Medical care</td>
<td>• Are fearful of reaching out for assistance</td>
<td>• Queer and trans community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housing</td>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td>• Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td>• Medical care</td>
<td>• Utilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Medical care</td>
<td>• Food</td>
<td>• Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food</td>
<td>• Utilities</td>
<td>• Home repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilities</td>
<td>• Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funds</td>
<td>• Home repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Home repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When rating how important it is for aging adults to access various services, participants in all segments gave the highest average mean to healthcare, indicating this is the service it is most important for seniors to access. Participants, overall, gave ratings of 5 or higher to each of the listed services, indicating that it is at least somewhat important for aging adults to access all these services.
Key Findings: Awareness and Perceptions of Aging Services

Participants, overall, indicated there is a general lack of awareness of the services available to aging adults in the community.

When asked where they would go if they needed information about aging-related services, general public participants most frequently mentioned Google, family and friends, and the senior center.

When rating how well the community does at meeting various needs for seniors, overall participants gave the highest average ratings to healthcare, social opportunities, and nutrition, indicating these are the needs the community does best at meeting.

General public participants (or seniors) gave higher ratings to each of the listed services, indicating they are more pleased with the community’s efforts in each area than are AAS staff and community partners. Participants gave low- to mid-range average ratings to describe how well the community does at meeting the various needs for seniors, indicating there is a huge opportunity for improvement.

![Overall Gap Analysis: Importance of Services vs. How Well the Community Meets the Needs of Older Adults](image-url)
AAS staff and community partners said Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services does exceptionally well at 1) providing social opportunities, 2) providing access to senior centers, and 3) implementing programming.

When asked about the community’s gaps in services for providing for seniors, participants mentioned the following:

- Funding for aging programs and services
- Housing
- Transportation
- Income and retirement planning
- Being culturally inclusive
- Staffing
- Training
- Collaborating with partnerships

Participants suggested the following to increase awareness of and participation in aging-related programs and services:

- Advertise
- Canvass neighborhoods
- Collaborate with church and civic groups
- Collaborate with schools and youth organizations

“[My biggest need is] transportation. I can’t drive because of a health problem and when my husband’s gone, I’ll be stuck. I’ll have to ask other people.”
In-Depth Interview Results

Lighthouse Research & Development conducted sixteen in-depth interviews (IDIs) with AAS employees and other service providers working with aging individuals within the County.

The main objectives of this research project were to understand the needs of aging adults, evaluate how well older adult needs are being met, and identify gaps in services. To accomplish the project objectives, participants were guided through a discussion that encompassed the following topics and themes:

Gather Perceptions of Aging

- Identify the limitations aging members of the community face and define the limitations participants have been surprised by

Understand the Needs of Aging Adults

- Identify the needs of older adults in various demographic segments
- Determine the importance of various services being available for aging adults

Discover Awareness and Perceptions of Aging Services

- Determine if participants feel various aging needs are met by programs and services currently available to the aging community
- Identify gaps in services for aging individuals
- Discover how to increase participation in aging-related programs and services

Key Findings: Perceptions of Aging

When asked about their perceptions of aging and the limitations individuals face as they age, participants most frequently mentioned the following.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think of when you hear “aging”?</th>
<th>What does it mean to get older?</th>
<th>What limitations do older adults encounter?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>Physical limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td>Loss</td>
<td>Cognitive limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior centers</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Isolation, lack of socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents</td>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>Transportation challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health concerns</td>
<td></td>
<td>Financial challenges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked what comes to mind when they hear the term aging, participants most frequently mentioned “60+,” “assistance,” “senior centers,” “grandparents,” and “health” concerns.

In addition, multiple participants each mentioned words such as “independent,” “seniors,” “resources,” “old,” “gray hair,” “wisdom, “active,” “community,” “physical,” and “retirement.”

Note: There is a direct correlation between the size of the words above and the frequency with which participants mentioned each word. In other words, the larger the word, the more frequently it was mentioned.

“I don’t think people always understand or know what Social Security payments will actually get them...People don’t expect housing prices to increase beyond what they could pay. People don’t think they will face evictions as an elderly person, that they would be outpriced in the housing market and become homeless. That’s a shock to some people.”
Key Findings: Needs of Aging Adults

Participants overwhelmingly stated that though the community does well at providing programs and services for aging adults, the capacity and funding to meet such needs is low. Others feel there are adequate programs and services for seniors, but they are underutilized.

Participants most frequently said they are aware of the community providing food or nutrition services (specifically Meals on Wheels) senior centers, and transportation (specifically Rides for Wellness) for seniors.

When identifying the needs of the general aging population, participants most frequently mentioned housing, healthcare, socialization or companionship, and transportation. When discussing the needs of various segments of the aging population, participants said the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Low-Income</th>
<th>Hispanics/Latinos</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Neglect health</td>
<td>• Difficulty transitioning into traditionally male roles (i.e. finances, insurance, home repairs)</td>
<td>• Housing</td>
<td>• Language and cultural barriers</td>
<td>• Individuals with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty reaching out for help</td>
<td>• Difficulty transitioning into traditionally female roles (i.e. cooking, cleaning)</td>
<td>• Food security</td>
<td>• Difficulty accessing and navigating services</td>
<td>• Individuals experiencing homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor mental health</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Healthcare</td>
<td>• More likely to care for aging adults at home</td>
<td>• Pacific Islanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td>• Hesitant to reach out for assistance</td>
<td>• Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• In-home services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Accessing and navigating services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When rating how important it is for older adults to have access to various services, participants, on average, gave the highest ratings to healthcare (7.00) and nutrition (6.56), indicating these are the most important services for seniors. When asked to identify other services that are important for older adults to access, participants most frequently mentioned housing and mental healthcare.
**Key Findings: Awareness and Perceptions of Aging Services**

Participants most frequently said that older adults rely on the following resources for aging-related information: family and friends, Aging & Adult Services, church, senior centers, the internet, and 2-1-1.

When identifying the gaps in services provided for seniors, participants most frequently mentioned: lack of funding, housing, transportation, in-home services, and food security.

The following chart illustrates the gap between how important it is for the aging population to access various services and how well the community meets the needs for older adults. Participants feel the community does not adequately provide for the aging population in all areas but one.

When asked how to increase participation in aging-related programs and services, participants overwhelmingly suggested increasing awareness of the services offered, followed by improving the public's perception of senior centers.
Mixed-Mode Survey Results

Lighthouse Research & Development, Inc. was contracted by Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services to determine Salt Lake County residents’ awareness and perceptions of services provided for older adults in the community.

Specific objectives for each section of the report are outlined below.

- Determine if respondents have parents or close family members over 65 who live in Salt Lake County, and determine how involved respondents are in the lives of these individuals or if they have provided care for these individuals
- Identify aging services that respondents or those close to them anticipate needing in the future
- Discover how important it is for older adults to have access to various aging services
- Determine if the community has adequate programs and services available to meet the needs of older adults
- Identify services in the community that would be helpful for older adults
- Determine how well the community does at meeting older adults’ various needs
- Discover awareness of Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services
- Identify the programs or services respondents or their loved ones have utilized
- Determine if respondents have visited a senior center in the last 12 months
- Identify resources respondents rely on for aging-related information and determine the usefulness of various information sources
- Gather respondents’ impressions of senior centers
- Gather respondent demographic information, including gender, age, ethnicity, household income, and city of residence

The research project consisted of telephone and online surveys to gather information from Salt Lake County residents age 45 or older. The scope of work for the research project included the following:

- Project consultation with Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services personnel
- Programming of the telephone and online survey instruments
- Completion of at least 410 interviews
- Analysis of the data, including percentages of results, cross-tabulations, and coding of open-ended responses

Key Findings: Respondent Demographics

There is an even distribution of male and female respondents; that is, 50% of respondents are male and 50% are female, with the following age breakdown:

- 45 to 54 years old 34%
- 55 to 64 years old 29%
- 56 to 74 years old 23%
- 75 or older 13%

90% of respondents are White/Caucasian, with 4% Hispanic or Latino, 2% Asian, 1% Black or African American, and 1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.
Survey respondents are typically very involved in the lives of older loved ones, with nearly half having served as a family caregiver sometime in the past year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent and Family Member Involvement %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% highly involved in the lives of parents or family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who have provided care for parents or family members in the last year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A breakdown of survey respondents’ income is shown below.

**Survey Respondents’ Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$30K</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30K - $50K</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50K - $100K</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100K+</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Findings: Awareness and Perceptions of Aging-Related Services**

47% of respondents said a family member will provide care for them when they can no longer live without assistance, while 30% said a spouse will care for them.

31% of respondents anticipate needing to access aging programs and services for themselves in the next five years, while 40% anticipate needing to access such programs and services for a loved one.

Respondents most frequently said older adults need access to healthcare, transportation, food or nutrition, socialization or companionship, and financial assistance.

When asked, “What programs and services do you feel older adults need access to?” survey respondents mentioned the following most frequently.

**Community Needs Top Mentions:**

- Healthcare: 33%
- Transportation: 20%
- Food, nutrition: 18%
- Socialization: 13%
When asked about the services they or their loved ones have accessed in Salt Lake County, respondents most frequently reported using healthcare services. Respondents also rated this service highest in terms of the community meeting the needs of aging adults.

On average, respondents gave mid-range ratings to each service when rating how well the community does at meeting each of the following needs of older adults.

It is important to note that community satisfaction ratings have decreased slightly since 2017 for each of the following services, with the exception of in-home services and advocacy, which were added to the 2023 survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Who Have Used Services</th>
<th>2023 Satisfaction Average Mean</th>
<th>Decrease in Satisfaction since 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-home services</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiving</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-life services</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income &amp; retirement planning</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering &amp; civic engagement</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social opportunities</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability services</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for people in long-term care facilities</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gap Analysis: Importance of Services vs. Effectiveness of Existing Services**

When rating how well the community does at meeting various needs of older adults in Salt Lake County, respondents, on average, indicated that the community does best at meeting healthcare needs and providing in-home services. However, participants only gave mid-range ratings to each of the services listed, indicating room for improvement. Further indicating the need for improvement is the fact that respondents gave lower satisfaction ratings in 2023 than they did in 2017 to each service listed.
Key Findings: Awareness and Utilization of Salt Lake County Senior Centers

63% of respondents were aware of Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services.

77% of respondents said they have not visited a Salt Lake County senior center within the past year, with nearly one-half of such respondents saying they have no need to visit a senior center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0 times</th>
<th>1-2 times</th>
<th>3-5 times</th>
<th>6-12 times</th>
<th>&gt; 12 times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked, “Why have you not visited a senior center in the past year?” survey respondents mentioned the following most frequently.

- No need 45%
- Too busy/No Time 11%
- Still in workforce 10%
- Not old enough 9%
- Active lifestyle 8%
- Lack of awareness 7%

Regardless, the majority of respondents have a positive impression of senior centers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Findings: Useful Information Sources

Respondents most frequently said they rely on family or friends or their doctors when they need aging-related information.

Which of the following sources do you rely on to provide you with aging-related information?

Top Mentions

- Family, friends 82%
- Doctor 75%
Respondents who mentioned relying on other aging-related resources most frequently mentioned the internet (56%).

When asked about the media they interact with on a regular basis, respondents most frequently mentioned the internet.

Which of the following resources do you interact with on a regular basis?

**Top Mentions**
- Internet 84%
- Online News 77%
- Television 73%
- Local News 67%
- Radio 63%
- Social Media 62%

**Key Findings: Mixed-Mode Survey Segment Analysis**

This section examines the statistically significant similarities and differences among respondent segments within the survey population. “Statistical significance,” means that the results in the data are not explainable by chance alone.

**Trends by Year**

When compared to respondents in 2017, 2023 respondents were:
• More likely to have parents or close family members over the age of 65 living in Salt Lake County
• Less likely to have visited a senior center
• More likely to rely on friends, family members, or neighbors for aging-related information

Trends by Gender

• Men were more likely to say their spouse will care for them when they are no longer able to live independently, while women were more likely to say they expect to use a long-term care facility.
• Women were more likely than men to say they regularly see or read direct mail.

Trends by Age

When compared to younger respondents, older respondents were:

• More likely to anticipate needing aging-related services for themselves in the next five years
• More likely to have heard of Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services
• More aware of information about senior centers
• More likely to watch local news programs, watch television, and read newspapers
• Less likely to use websites, read online news, and use social media

Trends by Income

Respondents with lower household incomes were more likely to:

• Have a “very positive” impression of senior centers
• Be aware that senior centers are open to those age 60 or older and that senior centers are free, though participants will be asked for a donation
Methods

Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services contracted with Lighthouse Research & Development Inc. in January of 2023 to conduct a three-phase research project on the needs of older adults in Salt Lake County. Lighthouse Research & Development Inc. is a skilled market research firm with expertise in qualitative and quantitative research and experience conducting market research on adults over sixty.

Lighthouse Research & Development issued detailed reports on each phase of the project, conducted statistical analysis of telephone survey results, and provided aggregated results of the complete research project, including a presentation of findings to the Aging & Adult Services leadership team.

The project phases are as follows:

1. **Focus Groups:** six focus groups conducted with members of the general public over age 45 residing in Salt Lake County; front-line and administrative staff members of Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services; and front-line and administrative staff members of other providers serving older adults in Salt Lake County.

   *Screener Design and Development*
   Lighthouse Research, in consultation with Salt Lake County Aging and Adult Services personnel, prepared the participant screener. The information collected during the screening process was used to verify participant eligibility and gather demographic information.

   *Sampling Procedures*
   The recruiting for the focus groups was conducted by using general public sample.

   *Recruiting*
   Experienced executive recruiters from the Lighthouse Research facility in Riverton, Utah, conducted the recruiting. Interviewers were briefed thoroughly on the screener before proceeding with recruiting. Calling hours for this recruit were between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays. Participants received personal emails confirming their invitation to participate in the user test, indicating the date and time of the discussion group. Careful attention was paid during the recruiting process to ensure only qualified individuals were invited.

   *Development of Moderator’s Guide*
   Lighthouse Research designed the moderator’s guide for the focus groups. The questionnaire encompassed the following topic areas:
   
   - Gather Perceptions of Aging
   - Understand the Needs of Aging Adults
   - Determine Awareness and Perceptions of Aging Services

2. **In-Depth Interviews:** sixteen interviews, at least one hour in length, with staff members of Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services and other providers serving older adults in Salt Lake County.

   *Screener Design and Development*
Lighthouse Research, in consultation with Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services personnel, prepared the participant screener. The information collected during the screening process was used to verify participant eligibility and gather demographic information.

**Sampling Procedures**
The recruiting for the in-depth interviews was conducted using sample provided by Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services. Participants were representative of Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services staff and other individuals working in aging-related fields.

**Recruiting**
Experienced executive recruiters from the Lighthouse Research facility in Riverton, Utah, conducted the recruiting. Recruiters were briefed thoroughly on the screener before proceeding with recruiting. Calling hours for this recruit were between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Participants received personal emails confirming their invitation to participate, indicating the date and time of the interview. Careful attention was paid during the recruiting process to ensure only qualified individuals were invited.

**Development of Moderator’s Guide**
Lighthouse Research designed the facilitator’s guide for the in-depth interviews. The questionnaire encompassed the following topic areas:
- Gather Perceptions of Aging
- Understand the Needs of Aging Adults
- Determine Awareness and Perceptions of Aging Service

**Interview Fulfillment**
A total of 16 in-depth interviews were facilitated by Christie Leake, who guided participants through the topic areas outlined in the facilitator’s guide. The interviews were held via Zoom between February 6 and 9, 2023.

3. **Telephone Survey:** 410 respondents from the public over age 45 who reside in Salt Lake County.

**Sampling Procedures**
A random sample of general public respondents was obtained by Lighthouse Research and used for data collection. Prior to data collection, the sample was randomized using the WinCati program.

**Pretest of the Questionnaire**
A pretest was conducted in January 2023, to determine the need for any modifications to the survey questions or procedures. Following the pretest, adjustments to the survey were made in consultation with Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services personnel.

**Data Collection**
**Telephone Interviews**
All telephone data collection was conducted by an experienced team of telephone interviewers at the Lighthouse Research interviewing facility located in Riverton, Utah. All staff members were thoroughly briefed and trained on the survey before proceeding with data collection.
Calling hours for the survey were between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays and between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The survey was programmed in a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) format. Using the CATI system, survey responses were directly entered into the database by the interviewer as the interview was in progress.

**Online Surveys**
The online survey was programmed in a Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) format. Using the CAWI system, survey responses were entered directly into the database by the respondent as the survey was in progress.

**Data Analysis**
The data analysis provides the following statistics upon which the written interpretative report is based:

- The frequency and valid percent of responses to each of the survey questions
- Responses to open-ended questions, coded for all occurrences of five or more mentions
- Cross-tabular analysis to compare the significant differences in responding among various demographic groups
- Comparative analysis to examine similarities and differences between responding in 2023 and 2017

**References**


**Credits**

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Research conducted and analyzed by Lighthouse Research & Development, Inc. www.go-lighthouse.com

Publication compiled and edited by Afton January